

# THE BROAD AX

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## Col. H. B. Varner of Lexington, N. C., is Willing to Spend Thousands of Dollars in Order to Blast or Blacken the Character and Reputation of His Wife, Mrs. Florence Varner, and Prove to the World that Some White Ladies in the Southland Are Not Above Consorting or Mating With Colored Men

COL. R. BAXTER McRARY IS THE WEALTHIEST COLORED MAN IN LEXINGTON, N. C., AND HE IS CHARGED WITH MAKING LOVE TO MRS. VARNER.

THE ABOVE AFFAIR IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE LATE HON. BENJAMIN R. TILMAN OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO SPRING FORTH FROM HIS GRAVE AND JOIN HANDS WITH HONS. JAMES K. VARDAMAN OF MISSISSIPPI AND JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS OF THE SAME ROTTEN STATE, HOKE SMITH OF GEORGIA, D. W. GRIFFITH, HEAD OF THE BIRTH OF A NATION AND ALL THE OTHER 'NEGRO HATING BLATANT FOOLS.

TO RUSH TO THE FRONT AND ASSIST TO RESCUE ALL THE DEAR WHITE LADIES IN THE SOUTH FROM THE CLUTCHES OF COLORED MEN WHOM THEY CLASS AS BABOONS, FOR THESE EMINENT OR DISTINGUISHED STATESMEN CONTENT THAT EVERY WHITE LADY THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH WOULD PREFER TO SUFFER TEN MILLION HORRIBLE DEATHS RATHER THAN TO PERMIT ONE COLORED MAN TO EMBRACE HER.

IT IS CLEARLY EVIDENT THAT MRS. VARNER THOUGHT OTHERWISE.

Greensboro, N. C.—Sensational, vivid, colorful and highly dramatic testimony was heard last week in the famous Varner divorce case, now being aired in the Greensboro Federal Court, in which H. B. Varner, prominent Lexington citizen, former owner of the Lexington Dispatch, and former president of the National Editorial Association, is suing his wife, Mrs. Florence C. Varner, for divorce, and R. Baxter McRary, wealthy colored man of \$100,000 for alienation of his wife's affections. Mrs. Varner, in a counter charge, is suing Varner for \$5,000 a year for reasonable subsistence.

In his charges against his wife Varner claims alleged clandestine meetings, secret automobile rides, telephone calls, silent forms of communications and visits to the Varner home when Varner himself was away. Mrs. Varner has denied all the charges, and the resulting testimony, given by witnesses of both sides, has proved highly interesting.

### Defense Springs Surprise

The defense in the trial sprung a surprise when at the conclusion of the direct examination of Mrs. Varner, during which she stoutly denied ever having had any wrongful relations with R. Baxter McRary, dismissed the witness from the stand without cross-examination.

In a voice charged with emotion, and seemingly under a great strain, Mrs. Varner emphatically denied having ever been anything more than a friend to McRary.

### Varner Made on Stand

The second witness called to the stand was Anna Miller, who for more than 20 years had been a maid-in-the-employment of the Varner family. Her statements practically corroborated those given by Mrs. Varner, in which she stated that McRary had come to the Varner home to see her. She stated that she and McRary had been friends from childhood, and that he often came to talk over reminiscences of their early life and to discuss religious matters. She further stated that she often cooked for McRary after his wife died, and at the request of Mr. Varner.

### "Before God, No, Never."

In a deposition, which was taken in a hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, recently, it was stated that McRary was 61 years of age; that he was at time disposition was taken, sick in bed and seriously ill, being unable to attend court in North Carolina; that he had always lived in North Carolina; that he had known Mrs. Varner for 20 years; that he was friendly with them both, as a white man and colored man are friends; that Varner had once asked him to make an address in his theater in Lexington; that Varner had sent him his picture which was exhibited at the reading and postal cards; that Varner allowed him to hunt with his gun; that Varner often asked him to write articles for his newspaper, the Lexington Dispatch; that he was accustomed to going to Varner's home to see Anna Miller or Mr. Varner, at request of either; that he spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Varner and they spoke to him in public as other

persons did, as "good morning, Baxter."

When asked if he had ever had illicit relations with Mrs. Varner, deposition read:

"Before God; no, never."

Deposition stated that he had never been alone with her in his life and that she would not even speak to him when alone on the street.

The deposition further stated that he was, and had been for the past ten years, in bad health.

Mrs. Varner Breaks Down.

Mrs. Florence C. Varner broke down and sobbed audibly in the Federal Court when she heard Fred O. Sink, star witness for H. B. Varner, tell how Mrs. Varner's wife alleged relations with Baxter McRary, affected the Lexington man.

"Oh, God, why didn't you bring me a message that she was dead," Sink declared Mr. Varner exclaimed when he told him in Greensboro of alleged occurrences in Lexington on August 9, involving alleged relationship between Mrs. Varner and McRary.

It was at this juncture of trial that Mrs. Varner burst into tears. It was the first sign of grief since the trial had begun.

Mr. Sink said that at request of Mr. Varner he had made all preparations for Mrs. Varner's trip; had purchased her ticket, given her upwards of \$1,000, Mr. Varner had directed and purchased two traveling bags for her, shipped all the furniture she desired and had finally taken her to Salisbury at her request and put her on train.

"If you are innocent, I hope you are proved so soon if you are guilty I hope to heaven you never have another moment's peace as long as you live," he told her.

"Mr. Sink, I am innocent." This was farworn conversation between Fred O. Sink and Mrs. Florence C. Varner on the night of August 12, Wednesday, when she was taken from Salisbury for her mother's home in Utah. Mr. Sink told the court.

Telephone People Testify.

Thursday afternoon the most sensational testimony was given by Bob Redwine, an employee of the Lexington Telephone Exchange. He testified that one month previous to the time the 18-year-old boys were going to camp, he was employed at the exchange between the hours of 9 p. m. and 7 a. m. One night (he wasn't certain of the date) about 10 p. m. No. 53 (McRary's telephone number) called No. 117 (Mr. Varner's number). He declared that when No. 53 called he asked Paul Grimes, a student in the office, if he wanted to listen to the conversation. He did and the two men listened. He testified that he recognized the two voices as being those of McRary and Mrs. Varner. According to Redwine, McRary said: "I'll be down in a few minutes," and that Mrs. Varner replied: "All right."

Mr. Redwine said he then told Grimes: "Let's watch and see if he does come down." Continuing he said: "In about 15 minutes we saw McRary coming. When he got to the entrance to the alley he turned into the alley." The witness couldn't say how far he went down the alley.



HON. SHERIDAN E. FRY,

High-class Lawyer, Associate Judge of the Municipal Court of Chicago for 12 years, who would make a splendid candidate for Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

He declared that in the years of 1918, 1919 and 1920 it was not an uncommon thing for No. 53 to call No. 117. He did not know who answered the telephone at No. 117 at all times.

On cross-examination he admitted that during his nine years at the exchange he had heard only one message exchanged between McRary and Mrs. Varner. However, he said that McRary on a number of occasions conversed with Anna Miller, the servant of the Varner, about religion and foreign mission work.

Paul Grimes, then took the stand and practically corroborated Redwine's testimony regarding the night the message from McRary to Mrs. Varner was heard.

"Meet Me at the Bridge."

Mrs. Hildred Anderson, an employee of Meyer's department store, this city, and a former employee at the Lexington Exchange, testified that on one occasion No. 117 called No. 53 (she contended that No. 53 was McRary's number) and that she heard the following message: "I have the papers, meet me." After hearing this, she said her attention was attracted to another number, and that upon returning to the McRary-Varner line, she heard McRary cough and hang up the receiver. On another occasion, Mrs. Anderson testified that McRary called and said: "Meet me at the bridge at 2 o'clock."

On cross-examination she said she didn't remember the exact dates, but that McRary called between the hours of 8 and 9 o'clock in either August or September, 1919. She stated that she knew McRary's and Mrs. Varner's voices.

Mr. Sapp put the witness through a stiff cross-examination. She told him she had lived in various sections of the west, in Leakeville, Danville and Lexington. She left Lexington over a year ago, coming to this city to live, her mother being with her.

Ed Beck, for nine years an employee of the telephone exchange, testified that in the summer of 1918, before July 15, No. 53 called No. 117. He intended listening from the start but his attention was called to another number. However, he declared that he returned to 53-117 line in time to hear: "You'll see." He was certain the voices of the conversationalists were those of McRary and Mrs. Varner. This occurred after 10 p. m., said the witness. This ended the telephone folk testimony.

"Is This a Fixed-Up Proposition?"

A. N. Hunt of the Valentine Lumber Company, Lexington, testified that during the summer of 1919, about 11 p. m. he saw McRary and Mrs. Varner standing on the corner of State street and Third avenue. He said it was his opinion they were standing close together,

that they soon parted, the man going one way, the woman another.

Mr. Sapp plunged into a tough cross-examination. He frankly asked the witness if his story wasn't a "fixed up proposition." Hunt emphatically denied any association with a scheme.

McRary Leaves Varner Lot.

Milton Hedrick, who lives three or four miles from Lexington, testified that he was in the habit of visiting the Davidson capital three or four times per week and that he had seen Mrs. Varner on numerous occasions. One night in January, 1919, between the hours of midnight and 1 a. m., he declared that he saw a man coming away from the Varner premises and that he watched him until he identified him as Baxter McRary.

Mr. Sapp put Hedrick through a grueling examination. The witness admitted that he had slept in McRary's house and he (Hedrick) owed McRary a little money.

Upon the opening of court at 1:30 o'clock Frank Koonz, an ex-policeman of Lexington, testified that in July, 1918, about 3:30 a. m. he heard a noise in the rear of the Varner premises and that he walked up the alley way and found McRary coming from the rear of the Varner lot. In reply to a question as to what he was doing there at that hour of night McRary said: "My cows have gotten out and I thought I saw one of them come here."

Burton Gives Vital Story.

T. M. Burton, for the past three years agent of the American Railway Express Company, declared that in the middle of August, 1919, that he placed himself in a lumber yard in the rear of the Varner property and saw McRary enter the lot. A bit later, the witness said, he heard a door open and shut. This was about 10 p. m. He saw him no more that night.

In the summer of 1918 Burton said he saw McRary pass up the alley in the rear of the Varner home about 10:30 p. m. He did not see him come out. He stated that he was certain it was McRary, as he passed within a couple feet of him.

Burton made a clear statement on direct examination, but tumbled into all kinds of trouble when Mr. Sapp commenced the cross-examination. He seemed to be terribly confused, with several blue prints in his possession. He was under the fire of the plaintiff's attorney about 40 minutes.

Ex-Policeman Tells Story.

Herbert Davis, former policeman of Lexington, declared that one night the last of August, 1919, between the hours of 10 and 10:30 o'clock at night he saw an automobile enter the alley in the rear of the Varner home. He was positive Baxter McRary was in the car. Within a few minutes he testified that

he saw a woman about the size of Mrs. Varner, wearing clothing similar to those he had seen Mrs. Varner wear, enter the auto. He further testified that about a week after that time, while standing near the Methodist Church, opposite the Varner home, he saw McRary drive up in front of Mr. Varner's home, and that a woman, which he stated, filled the description of Mrs. Varner, got out of car and entered the Varner home.

Upon cross-examination Davis said he could not swear the woman on either occasion was Mrs. Varner, but that he thought it was her. He said that curtains enclosed the car. Mr. Sapp asked the witness if he hadn't been accused of selling whisky. He said that he had but that he was innocent.

Richard Davis, a brother of Herbert's and also an ex-policeman and who was with his brother when he saw McRary and a woman. He corroborated his brother's testimony in most respects. However, he testified that it was between 11 and 12 o'clock at night and that the automobile drove in the rear of the Varner home. He was not able to identify the woman entering the car as Mrs. Varner, but he was certain the man was McRary.

A. H. Evans, postal clerk, and H. L. Beck, traveling salesman, testified as to the good characters of the Davis men.

Allen Richardson testified that Richard Davis had told him practically the same story as he told in the court. He also testified that during the first few days of July, 1919, he saw Baxter McRary enter the Varner premises from the rear and then turn into the lane, leading to the house. This occurred about 12:30 a. m. He didn't see him after he entered the lane.

Upon cross-examination an attempt to break down the evidence was made, but Richardson shooed the platform in pretty good shape.

McRary Receives Note.

J. L. Wilson, who stated that he operates a cafe belonging to C. D. Thomas, testified that as he was giving home about 1 a. m. one morning in July, 1920, he saw a woman which he took to be Mrs. Varner, get out of an auto, which later went to McRary's home.

Wilson further testified that two or three weeks after the auto episode McRary was in the cafe and that he saw him look in the direction of the Varner home; that a shade was raised and lowered. A few minutes later McRary went out of the restaurant and went to the post office. In the meantime Mrs. Varner went out of her home and gave Aunt Anna Miller a note which the old servant brought to McRary in front of the post office. McRary read the note and then wadded it up, said Wilson.

Wilson was all but annihilated by Mr. Sapp upon cross-examination.

THE THIRTY-FIRST STREET ANNEX OF THE LINCOLN STATE BANK WILL BE ONE OF THE MOST MODERN BANKING ROOMS IN CHICAGO.

THE WAINSCOTING CONSISTS OF ITALIAN AND VERMONT MARBLE. THE WALLS ARE DECORATED WITH IMPORTED CAEN FRENCH STONE; THE INTERIOR WOOD WORK IS HEAVY MAHOGANY AND HIGHLY POLISHED BRONZE ORNAMENTATIONS.

THE CAPITAL STOCK OF THE LINCOLN STATE BANK OF CHICAGO HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM \$200,000 TO \$300,000 AND THE SURPLUS HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM \$20,000 TO \$30,000.

HON. GEORGE F. LEIBRANDT, PRESIDENT OF THE LINCOLN STATE BANK, STATES THAT RIGHT NOW IT HAS \$200,000 ON HAND TO LOAN ON REAL ESTATE IN SUMS TO SUIT THE BORROWERS.

When the officers of the Lincoln State Bank of Chicago moved into their present bank building at 3105 S. State street some eight or nine years ago they labored under the impression that it would be plenty large enough for many years to come and at that time they honestly thought that they were really building much wiser than they thought but time has amply proven that they were agreeably mistaken for the past five or six years the Lincoln State Bank has been awfully crowded for more room for ever since its existence its business has been increasing at a very rapid rate and in order to hold onto the large volume of new business and to accommodate the ever increasing army of new depositors until finally its officials were actually forced to seek larger quarters some way or other for its thousands of patrons and at last they decided to construct the 31st street annex to the Lincoln State Bank which is right in the rear of the mother bank and the main entrance to the Annex will be on 31st street just east of State street.

The new annex is two stories high, fire-proof and strictly modern in every respect. The interior finish of the new banking room which is one of the finest in this city is a thing of beauty to behold, was executed by the George B. Stewart Company, interior decorators and wood finishers, 108 N. Dearborn street, everything in the spacious banking room is very pleasing to the eye, as stated before the wainscoting all

around the room consists of fine and the most expensive Italian and Vermont marble and above the wainscoting the walls are decorated with imported French Caen stone, the illuminations are perfect in every respect; the safety deposit boxes and the huge safety deposit vaults are absolutely fire and burglar proof and the highly bronze trimmings in connection with the rich mahogany wood work will for a long time to come leave a lasting and pleasing impression on the minds of all those who will frequent the new annex to the Lincoln State Bank.

Broadly speaking all the space in the new annex aside from the offices of its head officials, will be devoted to the commercial end of the banking business which will enable the bank to take care of thousands of new patrons in all of its banking departments.

Hon. George F. Leibrandt, the wise and far seeing president of the Lincoln State Bank of Chicago, expects to be able to throw the doors of the annex open within the next ten or fifteen days and be good and ready for the new rush of business which is constantly flowing into the Lincoln State Bank.

President Leibrandt also desires to let the public know through the columns of this newspaper that the Lincoln State Bank has on hand at the present time more than two hundred thousand dollars which it will loan on real estate in sums to suit those who desire to extend their business to take up old mortgages or to improve their vacant or their income property.

Mr. Sapp hammered him fiercely. The witness was obviously unable to handle himself.

### More Vivid Testimony.

George W. Petty Lexington, testified that he saw Mrs. Varner and Baxter McRary enter an alleged house of bad repute in Greensboro during the summer of 1915.

Petty, who was the seventh witness to take the stand, said he saw Mrs. Varner and McRary board train No. 36 at Lexington and watched them get off in Greensboro. He followed them along Elm street, he said, and saw Mrs. Varner enter a building just above a local hotel. McRary, he said, who was following her, also entered. Petty said he was walking about five steps in the rear of McRary and Mrs. Varner about 15 steps ahead. "She went upstairs in the building just below Celgg's hotel, stairs adjoining the street," he said in reply to question.

"What did McRary do?"

"Bax passed on by the steps, looked up, crossed the street and looked at the window in the building and about two or three minutes later recrossed again and went up the stairs, where Mrs. Varner had gone."

"Did you see them again?"

"No."

"What did you do?"

"About a minute or two later I went upstairs and looked about."

"Did you see anybody?"

"Not a soul."

"Hear anything?" he was asked.

"Everything was perfectly still."

To corroborate Petty's testimony,

Policeman Wray and Jeffreys, of the local police force, were placed on the stand. They testified that during the summer of 1915, when this incident is alleged to have occurred, Petty came to them and pointed the house out. Both men stated that at the time it was known as a house of bad repute and the "worst of men and women went there."

Hon. Timothy J. Fell, who occupies an extensive suite of law offices on the eleventh floor of the Chamber of Commerce Building, easily ranks among the ablest and the most successful lawyers in Chicago. For more than twenty years Mr. Fell, who always conducts himself like a high-class cultured gentleman, has been a constant subscriber of this paper and he would make a dandy candidate for Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County this coming June.

Henry Beck, brother-in-law of Rev. H. E. Stewart, suddenly died Tuesday evening on a Monon train which was headed for Chicago. Funeral services were held over his remains Thursday morning at the undertaking parlors of Kersey, McGowan & Morsell, 3515 Indiana avenue. Interment at Lincoln Cemetery.

Prof. W. W. Fisher, of Evanston, Ill., who holds down a responsible position in the office of Hon. Ed. J. Brundage, Attorney General of Illinois, Otis Building, has completely recovered his health again after being indisposed for the past three weeks.